

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-04
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1110
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
DIA/DN2
USCINCEUR
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
EUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2064

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PORS, SHUM, TU
SUBJECT: ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS ECEVIT'S
FAILURE TO CONTROL POLITICAL VIOLENCE

REF: A) ANKARA 0908, B) 77 ANKARA 8837, C) ISTANBUL 0819

1. SUMMARY: CURRENT WAVE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE CAPPED BY
MARCH 16 ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY "MASSACRE" (REF C). STUDENT
VIOLENCE HAS BEEN AUGMENTED BY NEW PARTICIPANTS, AND PATTERN
OF "VOICELESS" URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY EMERGING. PRESSURE
FOR IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW IS CREATING STRAINS WITHIN
GOVERNMENT. BOTH INCREASING VIOLENCE AND THE ALTERNATIVE
OF MARTIAL LAW ARE POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING FOR ECEVIT
GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY
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2. INCREASE IN VIOLENCE: ADDRESSING NEWSMEN ON MARCH 8,
MININT OZAYDINLI STATED THAT IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF 1978
THERE WERE 72 IDEOLOGICAL KILLINGS. HE CONTRASTED THIS WITH
272 POLITICALLY MOTIVATED KILLINGS DURING ALL OF 1977. THE
STEPPED-UP VIOLENCE WHICH BEGAN WITH THE STRAFING OF STUDENTS
AT ANKARA'S MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (METU) ON

DECEMBER 22, 1977 (REF B), SEEMS TO HAVE PEAKED WITH THE SENSELESS ATTACK AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY ON MARCH 16 (REF C).

3. FROM CAMPUS WARFARE TO URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES: WHILE THE METU AND ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY INCIDENTS CLEARLY INDICATE THE CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN VIOLENCE, THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE SHIFT AS AN ASSORTMENT OF THUGS, THRILL-SEEKERS, AND OTHERS WITHOUT CLEAR POLITICAL MOTIVATION HAVE BECOME INVOLVED. OVERALL, THE NEW PATTERN SEEMS INCREASINGLY CLOSE TO THE URBAN GUERRILLA PATTERN SEEN IN OTHER COUNTRIES. ONE BIG DIFFERENCE, HOWEVER, IS THAT TURKISH VIOLENCE IS VOICELESS: NO "CREDIT" IS CLAIMED FOR BOMBINGS, AND NO POLITICAL DEMANDS OR WARNINGS ARE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH KILLINGS.

4. MARTIAL LAW: BY HIS INITIAL ACTIONS MININT OZAYDINLI, A RETIRED AIR FORCE GENERAL AND CONE-TIME MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, HAS SHOWN A PREFERENCE TO THINK IN TERMS OF MILITARY-TYPE SOLUTIONS TO THE VIOLENCE ISSUE AND RELY ON THE JANDARMA WHICH IS UNDER HIS CONTROL. THROUGH CONTACTS AND PRESS REPORTS, WE GATHER THAT OZAYDINLI FAVORS IMPOSITION OF LIMITED MARTIAL LAW IN URBAN AREAS AND EASTERN TURKEY. AT THE SAME TIME, HE APPARENTLY WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE DOWN UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SOLVE THE VIOLENCE PROBLEM, AND THEN REOPEN THE SCHOOLS. BUT, PRIMIN ECEVIT CONTINUES TO INSIST ON NORMAL MEASURES TO

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RESTORE ORDER. IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON FEBRUARY 28, SHORTLY AFTER THE FIRST RUMORS WERE HEARD THAT THERE WAS A DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OVER TACTICS TO CONTROL VIOLENCE, ECEVIT SAID, "WE ARE SHOWING AND WILL SHOW, WITHIN THE RULES OF A DEMOCRATIC STATE RULED BY LAW, WHAT THE STATE FORCE CAN DO WHEN USED EFFECTIVELY AND JUSTLY." COMMENTING ON THE KILLINGS AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY MARCH 16, THE PRIMIN TOLD REPORTERS HE BELIEVES THIS ACTION REPRESENTED THE "LAST GASP" OF GROUPS WHOSE CELLS WERE BEING BROKEN UP AND MEMBERS ARRESTED (A REFERENCE TO RECENT DAILY PRESS REPORTS OF POLICE SUCCESSES IN ARRESTING MEMBERS OF UNDERGROUND GROUPS). ON MARCH 17 ECEVIT ADDED, "MARTIAL LAW IS NOT REQUIRED."

5. IMPLICATIONS OF MARTIAL LAW: MARTIAL LAW IS ANATHEMA TO PRIMIN ECEVIT AND HIS REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP), WHO STILL CARRY BITTER MEMORIES OF THE 1971-73 PERIOD, ECEVIT HIMSELF NO DOUBT IS CONCERNED THAT A DECLARATION OF MARTIAL LAW WOULD TARNISH HIS HARD-WON SOCIAL DEMOCRAT IMAGE WHILE UNDERCUTTING HIS COMMITMENT TO FULL RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ECEVIT WOULD RESIGN RATHER THAN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH A DRASTIC MEASURE.

6. POLITICAL ISSUE: THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE CREATES A NATURAL ISSUE FOR THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PRESS, SOME ELEMENTS OF WHICH HAVE BEGUN TO ADVOCATE STRONGER STEPS. GUNERI CIVAOGU, A COLUMNIST FOR OPPOSITION DAILY TERCUMAN, HAS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BEEN DISCUSSING THE JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES, INCLUDING MARTIAL LAW. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH LARGE CIRCULATION GUNAYDIN, FORMER MININT KORKUT OZAL RECOMMENDED THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY, IF MARTIAL LAW IS UNPALATABLE. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT SUCH INCIDENTS AS THE ONE AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY ARE INSTIGATED BY THE RIGHT TO DISCREDIT THE PRIMIN FURTHER ON THIS ISSUE.

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7. POSSIBLE EFFECTS: CONTINUING POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT INABILITY TO BRING IT UNDER CONTROL ARE DESTABILIZING FACTORS WHICH COULD UNDERCUT ECEVIT'S POPULAR SUPPORT AND BRING DOWN HIS GOVERNMENT. THE MARTIAL LAW ALTERNATIVE APPARENTLY BACKED BY ECEVIT'S MININT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO UNDERMINE TURKISH DEMOCRACY AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT; IF IT REACHED THE POINT OF FORCING ECEVIT'S RESIGNATION, IT COULD SEVERELY WEAKEN TURKEY'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH OTHER PROBLEMS. SO FAR, HOWEVER, ECEVIT SEEMS ABLE TO COPE WITH THE POLITICAL EFFECTS BETTER THAN WITH THE VIOLENCE ITSELF.
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Message Attributes

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